

# LOCAL I-S NEWS

*for department store workers*

VOL. 2, NO. 7

244

NOVEMBER 15, 1950

## MEMBERS BLAST MACY OFFER; TAKE ACTION TO WIN RAISE

### Company Ups Ante 4½ Cents; Negotiators Stick To Task

"Again I say, are you kidding or on the level," demanded Negotiator Max Wald. "I'm not kidding," replied Macy's Fred Fischer as he advanced a fresh "offer" in response to the Union's demand for a cost of living wage increase.

Still sticking to the main points of the formula which originally produced an offer of 48 cents a week as "more than half-way relief from higher costs" the company made its first concession to Union pressure by upping its counter-proposal to 70% of the value of the point index rise since July 1st. Also included in the recent company package was an offer of 70% of the \$1.50 already won for 1951. This would amount to \$1.05 payable on the 1st of November.

#### Offer 52½ Cents

In reality the company offer boils down to approximately 52½ cents a week based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics index, which the Bureau itself admits is not an accurate reflection of the living cost picture.

Said President Sam Kovenetsky, "We asked for a raise and you persist in bringing back a 'formula.' We are not interested in systems of figuring that do not show the needs of the people. Macy's cries that five dollars is going to break them. But Macy's always looks at the gloomy side. They have always under-estimated their profits. We know that the company will make up the cost of our wage increase by again marking up their prices. If the company doesn't make up the cost we'll give back our raise!"

"That wouldn't be a good gamble," replied the company bargainer.

"We'll take that gamble" snapped the Union's President. He then continued, "When the war came and the hosiery mill raised the price of stockings Macy's simply said to themselves, 'we must maintain our rate of profit' and raised prices. We are doing the same thing. We are fighting to maintain our standard of living in the face of rising prices. We must bear the same increased costs that Macy's must bear. We must still look presentable on the job. We must still smile pleasantly for the customers. We can't do this in old clothes and on hungry stomachs. And if we

don't do it we get a bad job review!"

#### More Pay—Not Less Food

From every side of the bargaining table came bitter denunciation of the company's "We're not responsible" attitude. Jack Steinman warned, "If you want us to eat your Christmas bonus we're not going to very healthy. We're coming to the bonus period and if the people aren't healthy they just won't be able to work!" Asked Myrtle Clark, "Can you tell me how I can take care of my three children and myself on \$46 a week?" And Carl Lutz patiently restated a fact that everyone but management seems to know. He said, "A worker lives on his salary. He can't save. Fixed amounts out of his pay must go to rent, to gas and electricity and so on. The only place we can cut to meet these higher prices is in the food we eat. This means less food and cheaper quality. We reject this as a solution to our problem!"

In a telegram to Macy President Weil the negotiators protested the company's seeming indifference to the urgent need confronting Union members and demanded that the company "abandon formulas and return with an offer consistent with our basic needs." Further meetings with the company are expected shortly.

### Plan Strategy For Victory Drive; Urge Ban On Overtime, Sponsoring, Parade, Bonus

In one of the most explosive and dramatic series of actions that the oldest of the Local I-S oldtimers can recall, the members of the Union have taken matters into their own capable hands in an all-out effort to wring from Macy's a sorely needed substantial cost of living wage increase.

### Bonus Rules More Relaxed

The Union committee which met with management to discuss changes in the rules governing payment of the company's Attendance Incentive Bonus reports that it has won further relaxation of the formerly inflexible regulations.

Major change won over last year is the division of the Bonus Period into three parts. In each of these parts workers are allowed one personal lateness of up to fourteen minutes, for which there will be no penalty. In addition, lateness due to such factors as transportation delays will not automatically disqualify a person.

Absence during the bonus period because of death in the immediate family, being called for jury duty or pre-induction medical examinations will be excused and will not cost anyone his bonus.

Cautioned Vice President Hammond, "Any person denied his bonus for any reason owes it to himself to report to the Union office immediately!"

The campaign, which has already resulted in thousands of workers refusing to continue as sponsors or to accept overtime schedules, was inspired by many of the impassioned speeches and pleas made to the huge overflow audience at the October 31 general membership meeting at which more than 3,500 members heard first hand reports from Negotiating Committee representatives and from the Union's President.

### Union Election Committee Named

In conformity with Article X, Section 1 of the Local I-S Constitution the membership voted on a slate of eleven candidates for the Union's Elections and Objections Committee. Elected were: Frank Bedell (96), Mary Schlactman (11), Vincent Agresti (913), Catherine Wabbersen (Rev), James Roach (Pkg), Grace Mesina (Mfg), Mildred Kniska (Office), David Markowitz (Flatbush), Israel Cohen (White Plains), Peggy Galvin (Parkchester) and George Mueller (Jamaica).

This group will be responsible for the circulating of nominating petitions in November and December and for the conduct of the election of Union officers in January.

Petitions will be available at the Union office from November 15 to December 14th.

President Sam Kovenetsky in a report heavy with bitter sarcasm, lashed out at "the guys who waved the flag, then hid behind it, raised prices and raked in the dough." Attacking the company policy of maintaining a top-heavy crew of super-salaried executives while denying Union members an essential cost of living raise, the President said, "The executives and the shareholders get theirs from both sides. They get profits from their shares and then they share the profits. We also get it from both sides. We get it from the Supervisors and from the customers."

"When Mr. Fischer offered us his 48-cent 'formula,'" the President continued, "we told him that there was no point in talking about it. We told him that Macy's had paid a big \$3.58 dividend per share to people who had nothing to do with making the money. We told him that coffee alone had gone up more than 48 cents a pound. So we don't drink coffee, but even water is a little scarce these days," he commented wryly.

#### We Will Win!

Hitting again and again at the company's arrogant refusal to give serious consideration to the urgent needs created by rising living costs, Sam Kovenetsky declared, "The flood of letters, postcards, petitions and delegations that deluged Mr. Weil convinced management that you mean business—that you must have that cost of living increase now and that if rising costs wipe out what you win now, you will be back to fight for more!"

When the floor was opened for discussion, Vincent Muscato of Jamaica led off. He said, "I was the maker of the motion at the Steward meeting that we demand at least \$5. I was earnest then and I'm more so now. We have the strength to win—let's use it! Let's not take three customers at a time—let's take only one. Let's hit them where it hurts. We can win!"

(Continued on page 2)



Summarizing proposals made by previous speakers, Arthur Daum urges that members begin to take immediate action to convince management that the people mean business in their demand for an immediate cost of living wage increase. Membership approved program and swung into action the next day.



## BRANCH STORE NEWS

### PARKCHESTER



Georgine Staib

Howard Ahlmeyer (P1), Ralph Savino (P2), Leon Granless (P2) and Bog Moran (PKR) are just sitting around and waiting for the Army to call. They have already completed their pre-induction physical exams. We hope they will keep in touch with us after they leave and let us know where they are stationed so that we can keep them posted on what's going on . . . best of luck, fellas . . . Edythe Gould (P4) is leaving us and heading for Dallas, Texas with her parents. We're sorry to see you go, but wish you a good journey. Edythe . . . Emma Bloom (P4) has bought a home in Florida and by now should be comfortably settled. Hope she came through the recent hurricane in one piece! . . . Dorothy Johnson, (P10) is out ill with pneumonia and Frances Wallace, (P1) is out with injured shoulder. We wish you both a really speedy recovery. We are glad to have Jim Sullivan (PKR) back with us. Jim has just gotten over an infection and an attack of asthma . . . Biggest topic of conversation is the measly 48 cents the company insulted us with. Dozens and dozens of people have told Lil Branca, our representative on the Negotiating Committee, to fight as hard as she can for a real raise to meet the higher cost of living.

### JAMAICA

All the happy faces in the Cafeteria mean only one thing — another victory for the Union. This time our Store Committee won a grievance — with back pay — for Violet Scigliano (J13). Arthur Aronowitz was promoted from stock to sales in Toys. We are all sorry to hear that Tonja Gordon's (PKP) father passed away . . . Our highly successful Divisional Meeting last week reflected our determination to win at least a \$5 to counter the high cost of living. There was real enthusiasm and solid unity around the Union's program. Our Shop Steward and Store Committee delegation to the manager's office could have left no doubt in anyone's mind about our meaning business . . . We are starting our swimming parties at the Hotel St. George again on November 1st. Tickets are only 81 cents including tax and entitle us to use the terrific pool and gym . . . We all feel that we are very fortunate in having Florence Schnefel on the Union Welfare Board. She's doing a swell job and has earned a vote of thanks from all of us . . . Store Committee Chairman Vince Muscato reminds all Stewards that grievances must be written up in order to guarantee the best possible settlements — so what are we waiting for?

### FLATBUSH



Rhea Sabran

We're sorry to report that Rene Finkle's (F5) daughter is in the hospital with a severe virus infection and that Rita Gershenson (Dresses) is in the hospital under observation . . . Laura Mellen (Sportswear) is still out and won't be back for at least another four months after hurting her wrist while trying to lift something that was too heavy for her. Even though she's collecting compensation there's not much consolation! . . . Lucille Fisher is the new Shop Steward in Toys. Glad to have you on the team, Lucille . . . The turnout for our Divisional meeting was just terrific. The place was jammed. People were crowded into every corner and they all agreed that the Unions fight for a \$5 cost of living raise was the only thing we could do. From all sides you hear people say, "We buy less and spend more than ever and there just isn't much money." The company knows we mean business and that we are determined to win! As we have mentioned before, the women in the store last year formed the Hobby Club. Last year they bought and dressed 25 dolls for orphaned girls and equipped tool chests for similarly deprived boys. This year they have doubled their production. The project gets full support from raffles which are sold . . . The prize? One of the dolls!

### WHITE PLAINS

Congratulations to Arthur Collignon of Receiving who made a suggestion which brought him \$50—less Withholding, of course! Also to Joe DiDonato who was promoted from Stock to Receiving . . . Edgar Reed, promoted from Porter to Packing, Dave Spivak, advanced from Stock to selling in Housewares. Best wishes are also in order for Helen Zajar (Accessories) who will answer when called Mrs. Kowalczyk and to Joe Rotunda (Receiving) who hit the jack-pot when he finally found a 3½-room apartment . . . The entire store has been super-charged as the Shop Stewards swung into action and accepted protests over the 48 cents gratuity offered by management. It seems that the ire was as much over the insult to sincere requests as over the offered pittance. Without exception, each worker felt that the cost of living rise was serious and they didn't like the manner in which their request was handled. The entire Shop Steward body called on Manager Gould to present these protests in petition form. He knows we're not kidding! . . . This column winds up my relationship with Local 1-S. I shall most certainly miss my many friends and all the activity and those who stimulate the action. Note: Publication of this copy was unavoidably delayed. We hope we're not too far behind the times.—The Editor.



Hilda Proctor

## LETTERS to the EDITOR

To The Editor:

I received the check for \$50 which the Union sent and I want to thank you for your promptness in forwarding it — this having been sent without any requests from me. I can hardly improve on such good service. I consider your Health Plan excellent and it is a pleasure to be identified with it. Thanking you again, I remain, Sincerely, Maude Stubing

### MEDICAL PLAN FACTS IN NEW BOOKLET

The long-awaited Medical Plan booklet has rolled off the presses and distribution to Local 1-S's 9000 members has already begun. More than 3500 Union members received the informative handbook at the October 31st general membership meeting. Others are receiving theirs through their Shop Stewards or at the Union office. The pocket-size booklet, called "Here's To Your Health" gives details of the additional protection afforded Union members under the terms of the recently concluded Medical Plan which supplements the Health and Medical Plan won by the Union in the 1949 negotiations.

### 1-S Egg Sale Helps Beat High Costs

With prices high and still climbing Local 1-S is continuing its Thursday sale of fresh Jersey eggs at the Union office. The sale, jointly sponsored by Local 1-S and the Farmer's Union, gives Union members an opportunity to buy this basic food at prices which are usually well below the prevailing retail rate. When every penny counts members find that they can buy better quality at lower prices at the Union office. Eggs are on sale every Thursday from 10 A.M. to 7 P.M. All eggs are packaged in extra strong cartons for safe carrying.

### LIBRARY FEATURES SPECIAL REQUESTS

Demand for books at the Local 1-S Library has been so heavy that the Union is already considering a substantial expansion of its facilities. Even without additional books, however, the Library continues to offer a good selection of recent fiction and non-fiction as well as some of the old stand-bys. While it is impossible for the Library to have on hand every book that the large 1-S membership might want there is a "Special Request Service." If you want to borrow a book which is not on the Library's shelves, just fill out a card and the book will be ordered for you at no additional charge. The Library is open from 11 A.M. to 1 P.M. and 5 P.M. to 7 P.M. every day except Saturdays, Sundays and holidays.

**FREE LEGAL AID CLINIC**  
Local 1-S Attorney  
Sam Shapiro  
at the Union Office  
Every Tuesday  
5 to 7 PM

## Members Blast...

(Continued from page 1)

Asked Catherine Blatt, "How many of you have seen the sign in Macy's window? It says, 'How much have you got to throw away?' We have nothing! We need every penny we have, and more besides. If we stick together on whatever action we decide, we can win."

Said Bill Atkinson, "I'd like to suggest that Macy's will be most impressed if those who are financially able to do so refuse to sign up for the Christmas bonus until our raise is won!"

And Mary Schlachtman, new to the Manhattan Center microphone, said, "In every department we have sponsors and alternates. If we give up our flowers we can be sure it will help us win. I know many, including myself, cannot afford it, but I'll do it because I know that within a few weeks we'll win and I'll get it back plus a raise!"

Thundered John Milo, "We in Receiving are working overtime. The company needs us. We can hurt them bad if we refuse to work overtime and iron days. Let's all make this small sacrifice and we can be sure of winning a big victory!"

### Action! Action!

To thunderous applause Al Pettijean roared, "To hell with the

Thanksgiving Day parade. Just don't show up!"

And Thelma Worth said, "The thing that Macy's hates is having the public know what's going on. Let's get our mimeograph machine rolling and tell the story!"

Arthur Daum summed up the proposals and urged that the members take immediate steps to put them into action. By afternoon of the following day it was apparent that the membership had given the problem lots of thought and had decided to act. A special meeting of Shop Stewards the night after the membership had gathered pledged that no effort would be spared to win a quick and complete victory. As we go to press, union members are vigorously attacking the problem and are confident that as the Christmas holiday nears, so does victory.

### Union Seeks Home

In the other action of the evening, the membership almost unanimously supported a resolution which calls for the creation of a committee empowered to look for a building to house the Union headquarters and its many activities. The committee is to be responsible to the Executive Board. Approval was urgent because of eviction proceedings against the Union. The present building has been condemned and tenants must vacate.



Curtain call at "Our Town." Herald Square Players take a bow to the accompaniment of enthusiastic applause of Union members.

## Curtain Falls On Drama Group Hit

Last week the curtain of the renowned Cherry Lane Theater fell on a hit. For five nights the spotlight shined on stellar acting and the small auditorium shook with loud applause.

For five distinguished performances the men and women of the Local 1-S Herald Square Players proved that they are real actors and genuine troupers as they brought back to life Thornton Wilder's Pulitzer Prize winning play "Our Town."

Enthusiastic play-goers were swiftly transported from the tiny Greenwich Village theater to Grover's Corners, New Hampshire with the first lines spoken by Seymour Seidner, the play's narrator. Not once in the course of the three well-paced acts did one escape the small town life that was unfolded on the stage.

June Hammerstein as "Emily," Ruth Silverstein as "Mrs. Gibbs," Edith Simmons as "Mrs. Webb," George Kenton in the role of "George," Burton Wald's part of "Dr. Gibbs" and Jay Irwin's characterization of "Mr. Webb" all won high approval.

Margaret Viola, Rose Novak,

Dorothy Koenig, Mary Sullivan and all other members of the cast gave able support to an all-round splendid performance.

Jark Paritz, director of the Union's drama group, should be singled out for special praise for the excellence of his presentation despite numerous technical difficulties which arose.

First-nighter President Sam Kovenetsky expressed the sentiments of the entire audience when he said, "Every member of the troupe did a terrific job. The Union can be very proud to be the sponsor of such a wonderful activity. We hope that other men and women interested in acting and in the technical end of the theater will answer the next call. It's really an eye-opener to see what even complete amateurs can do under a skillful director's guidance."

The Herald Square Players, while they are not considering a return engagement of "Our Town" are already hunting for another play and are tentatively planning an early March opening date. Jack Paritz urged all interested union members to watch the pages of the Local 1-S NEWS for casting try out information.



## LOCAL 1-S NEWS

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**LOCAL 1-S, UNITED RETAIL WORKERS, UNAFFILIATED**  
 125 West 33rd Street New York 1, N. Y.  
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 1st Vice Pres.: George Gurian — 2nd Vice Pres.: Elizabeth Hammond  
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## Men And Machines

Early economists were very blunt about things. They said, for example, that wages were intended to provide just enough money for a worker to feed, clothe and house himself and a raise a family on a subsistence level. The workers didn't have to be told the theory. They knew the facts!

As time went on, however, the propaganda machines began to tell a more attractive story. Workers were then told that they were "partners" with management and that their wages were their share of the plant's profits. The "partnership" myth is still alive and kicking, except when negotiations for wage increases and other improvements are underway. At those times management dissolves the "partnership" and tells its employees that the company cannot be held responsible for the ability of the wage earner to provide the necessities of life for himself and his family.

Only as trade unions grew in strength have workers been able to substantially improve their living standards. For it was through their collective, organized strength that they were able to demand and fight for a bigger return on the investment of their labor. It was in the course of such struggle that workers came to realize that they produce ALL the profits of a company — that when they are on a picketline and machines stand idle there are no profits. Neither high salaried executives nor expensive machines produce anything by themselves. Only the skill, the know-how and the brawn of the "little man" produces the goods we all consume and the corporate profits a few enjoy.

But what is the fate of the "little man?" When he has won his fight for a raise he is forced to watch prices rise. The manufacturer, the landlord and the large merchant swarm down on him like a flock of vultures and devour his gains. Through manipulation of prices they still keep the average worker close to the "subsistence level" so honestly described by the early economists. The "little man" is giving almost no opportunity to save and plan for the time when he will no longer be physically able to continue at his work.

The government very wisely and generously allows management to deduct from taxes a "depreciation" allowance on machines and fixtures. The intelligent business man each year puts aside a sum of money to replace his equipment when it is old and no longer able to do an efficient job. But neither the government nor the business man is so wise or so generous when considering the problem of aging workers whose efficiency is on the downgrade! It is true that we have a Federal Social Security Administration. It is also true that some business establishments have negotiated or created pension plans. But the sorry fact remains that any person forced by age or poor health to live on such allowances is promptly reduced to a miserable, substandard "subsistence" level of mere existence. This existence is in sharp contrast to the feathered-nest life which management's executives lead both before and after retirement.

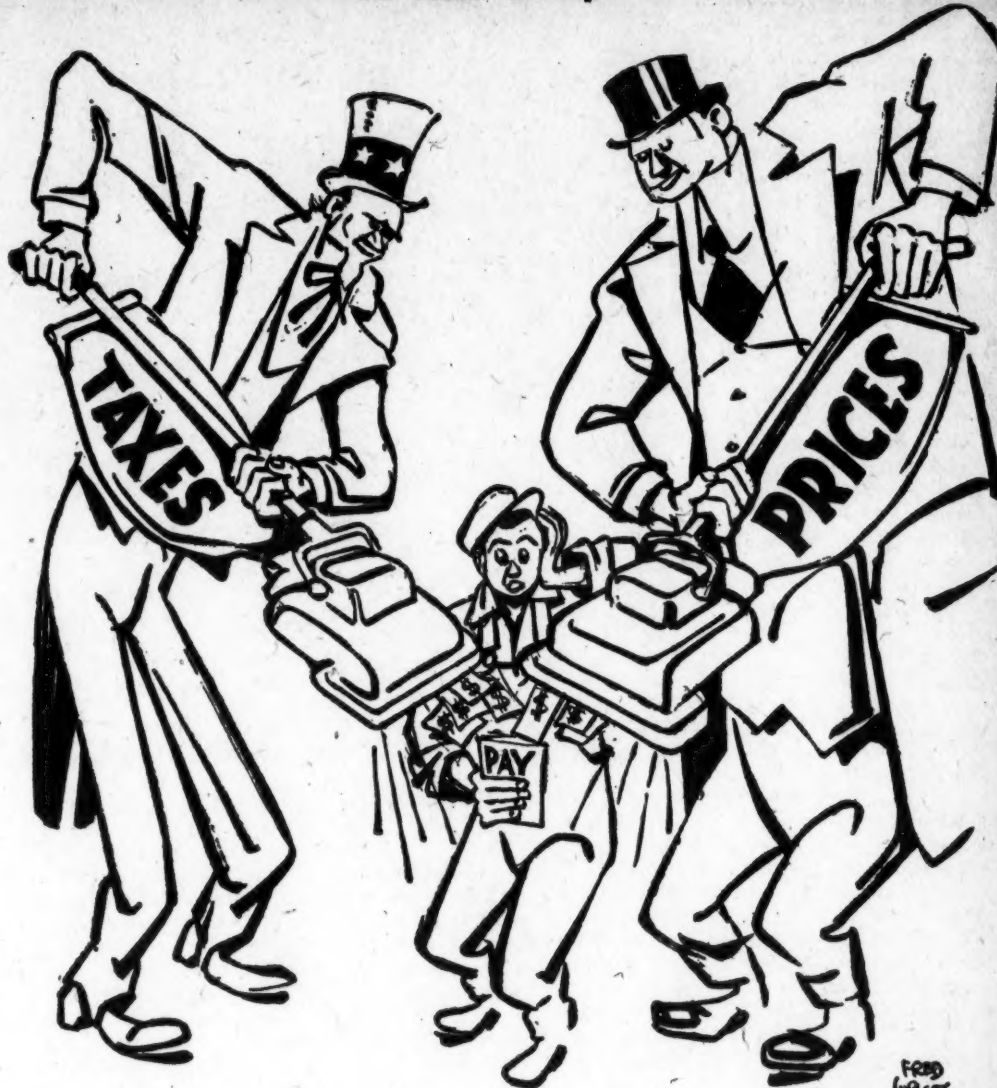
## What's The Answer?

The only real and lasting answer to the problem must come from the workers themselves. Through their Unions they must work to win *real* pension plans that will provide enough money upon retirement to allow them to live like human beings. They must win pension plans that don't allow management to arbitrarily cut the amounts to the vanishing point. But of equal importance, they must give full support to their union's fight for wages high enough to allow a decent living standard today and some realistic planning for tomorrow.

If we quietly accept the present practise of machines receiving more attention than human beings we will find no improvement. If we strongly insist that our productive years earn for us the right to a decent standard when we are no longer able to stand eight hours a day and tend machines or customers we shall find that our united strength can move what appear to be the mountains of business and government.

If we do not take a hand in working to improve our conditions of work and retirement we can be quite sure that no one will do it for us! Our welfare is *our* business. If we work at it as hard as we work for management we can be certain that the results will be as pleasing as a profit report is to a stockholder. We have everything to gain!

## A Clean Sweep!



## Cost Of Living Facts

While the Bureau of Labor Statistics freely admits that its Consumers' Price Index fails to properly reflect actual increases in living costs, many employers (including Macy's) attempt to use the Index as a basis for "formulas" designed to give wage earners minimal relief from climbing prices.

House wives and workers, who are the nations' largest group of consumers, need no index to tell them that the value of their dollar has shrunk so badly that they need more of them if they are to continue to feed and clothe themselves according to minimal acceptable health standards.

Since there are no guarantees that the dollars we earn are "Sanforized" and will not shrink further, we must rely on our united strength to win whatever gains we need in order to preserve our living standards.

### Union Research

Following the company's presentation of their "48-cent formula," Local 1-S began a research project to learn the truth of what was happening to wages. We learned that from June 15 to October 5, the price of butter had climbed six cents a pound, milk five cents a quart, eggs fifteen cents a dozen. Hard facts showed that poultry had jumped more than five cents a pound and inexpensive cuts of meat such as chuck, chopped beef and pork chops averaged more than five cents a pound higher. Fish, once considered an inexpensive substitute for meat, had climbed eight cents a pound. Bread, up an average of two cents a loaf, and higher prices on fruits and vegetables added further burdens to

already overstrained family budgets.

Based on minimum quantities of the least expensive foods, it was learned that increases since mid-June are costing the average family of three more than three additional dollars a week for food alone! Add to this the fact that shoes, stockings and other items of essential wearing apparel cost more than they did four months ago. Household appliances, from can openers to electrical equipment, take more out of our pockets than they did before.

### Higher Prices, Taxes Coming

On top of all this, the government is taking a bigger chunk out of our pay envelopes in the form of higher taxes. For members of Local 1-S this increase takes away a weekly average of more than a dollar. As though all of this isn't bad enough, we are repeatedly warned that still higher prices and higher taxes are in store for us in the early part of 1951 despite the fact that increased costs and taxes are already taking more than five dollars every week!

While the monthly newsletter of the National City Bank conscientiously opposes every suggestion of an "excess profits tax," it bemoans the fact that, "Already the tax burden is so heavy that it is not easy to tighten the screws or find new sources of revenue without destroying individual and business initiative. For example, at the same time that Congress was framing the bill to increase taxes, the Department of Commerce issued a report showing that total taxes — Federal, state and local — in 1949 aggregated almost \$54 billion, an average of \$359 for every man, woman and

child in this country. For the average family of four, this means taxes (direct and indirect) of more than \$27 a week."

From this, and from daily experience, it must be apparent to all that *any* increase in prices or taxes can only result in a lowered standard of living.

Despite Macy claims that higher taxes and fares are beyond their control and that they therefore will not grant wage increases to offset them, it is up to every worker to make it clear to the company that they have no place else from which to get the additional pay they need to live. Management must be made to understand that we work in order to buy the necessities and that we belong to a fighting Union in order to guarantee that our labor is fairly rewarded. When management is once again made fully aware of those facts we will know that we are closer to victory.

## HEALTH PLAN NOTE

If you plan to take a leave of absence for more than 30 days or if you leave the store and wish to continue your Health Plan coverage on a direct payment basis **YOU MUST** see the Local 1-S Health Plan Consultant at the Union office *within 30 days from the end of the month in which you leave the store*. Protect yourself — protect your family — protect your benefits. Be sure to come to the Union office on time!



## In The Service

The following members of Local 1-S have been called during the recent past to serve their country. We wish them all the best of luck and pledge that we shall continue to strive to make Macy's a better place in which to work. Our success will help make their homecoming a brighter one. We can only hope that international sanity will soon be restored and that they will serve their tour of duty in peace.

— We Salute —

George Courides—CTC-15  
Alexander Smith—RPR-2  
Paul Guzzardo—RRKF-111  
Bernard Shipkowski—NC-04  
Angelo Gorga—164-903  
James Lee—159-2952MR  
William Goldis—38-30  
Nicholas Polini—88-47  
Rudolph Davis—26-906  
Gerry McElroy—91-59  
Gregory Conlan—159-903  
George Dawes—MC-718  
Peter McKinney—PL-20  
Richard Bingham—RPR-4  
James Langan—SF-901  
Edward Dobies—11-229  
Nicholas Saio—NC-502  
Jessie Rand—RMIY-30  
Armond Herndon—204-188D  
John Fahy—MC-611  
Herman Kuhn—NC-511  
Arthur Jacobs—NWW-5  
John Cavanagh—RMIA-44  
Jason Wolfe—38-904  
Michael Troncone—164-904  
Stanley Schachter—88-903  
Alex Szucs—51-907  
Frederick Ships—166-901  
Joseph Stollar—129-02  
Frank Retcho—92-902  
Maurice Kinsella—903-903  
Patrick Flanagan—RRKE-15  
Raymond Rush—W-3-11  
Bruce Barton—W12-901  
Keith Toucey—W10-29



Water sports, games and calisthenics mark the beginning of a new season of the Local 1-S Swim-Gym program at Textile High School.

## Hanky Girls Not Boxed

The girls of 29 Department were forced to look a gift box in the mouth and decided they didn't like it. The trouble all started when Macy's introduced a new transparent handkerchief box, complete with doily and white ribbon and expected the department's salesclerks to make up the boxes. The girls delicately held their noses and said the idea smelled. Then they wrote their grievance. They told management that they had other duties for which they were being paid. And they said that there were workers who earned their living by wrapping. They

demand that a person be brought into the department for that purpose.

Floor Committee representative Agnes Wagner and Shop Steward Emma Fornuff pressed their case. At first the company suggested that the boxes be made up at the time of sale, but that was vetoed. Finally the Divisional Superintendent got the idea and advised the Union spokesmen that a girl from the Packing Department would be assigned to the job and that the salespeople would no longer have to worry about ribbons and bows.

## Swim-Gym Tickets At Union; \$1 Buys Season Of Recreation

While the Local 1-S Swim-Gym program was slightly delayed because tickets were not available at the Board of Education Activities Director Pat Auletta announces that all obstacles have now been removed and activities are under way.

Union members are once again organizing department parties and are planning on spending at least one evening a week in the excellent gymnasium and swimming pool at Textile High School, 18th Street between 8th and 9th Avenues.

Facilities at the school include basketball, badminton, volleyball, calisthenics space and many others. The pool is under the con-

tinuous supervision of a trained lifeguard.

Tickets, which may be purchased at the Union Office for \$1, entitle members to use the pool and the gym as many as four nights a week every week until May.

### Other Activities

In addition to the gymnasium facilities offered by Local 1-S there are organized team sports which are open to all who wish to enter competition.

The Union's Bowling tournament has attracted many men and women from departments throughout the store. Under the handicapped system used the inexperienced player is given a fighting chance to match the skill and scores bowled by older hands at the game.

Local 1-S basketball teams have ranked high in city-wide tournament play. Always on the lookout for new talent, tryouts are open to all courtmen. Candidates should get in touch with Pat Auletta at the Union office. The girls of the Office Division and White Plains put two teams on the courts last year and are planning to do so again.

Local 1-S, which has devoted considerable time and energy to the development of a well-rounded athletic program has shown only one weakness. Namely, a lack of support by the members for their championship teams.

While people still spend money to see amateur and professional sports, they are missing the chance to see top-notch competition at no cost. Plan to watch your 1-S teams in action—they're the top!

## Going To Stop — They Go!

Their Supervisors had been doing the switchboard girls a "favor" by taking their places at five o'clock so that they could have a short relief.

The girls themselves decided that by allowing that to continue they were helping Macy's violate the contract which says that executives cannot perform staff duties.

They filed their grievance with Chief Operator Laravy, who returned it marked, "Will discontinue." By chance the girls learned that their chief meant — "will discontinue reliefs!" When the problem reached the manager's desk he said that he couldn't see how the girls could take reliefs if the supervisors were not allowed to work. He was bluntly told that the girls were perfectly capable of relieving each other. He backed his Chief Operator and Shop Steward Alice Leinberger warned, "Expect trouble!" Before anything came of the warning, the company backed down to give the girls a complete victory. The girls are now preparing to fight for the same 30 minute reliefs the phone company gives its operators. Who ever said "leave well enough alone"?

## KNOW YOUR OFFICERS

### GEORGE GURIAN - Part I



George Gurian was born in Bridgeport, Connecticut, but at the age of seven became a "naturalized" citizen of Brooklyn. He graduated from grammar school, went through the motions of registering for admission to Alexander Hamilton High, only to decide at the last minute that he wanted to join his father in the family business.

After three years George left his business "career" and moved from job to job until he found his way into Macy's Receiving Department for the 1931 Christmas season. At the end of the holiday rush he found that he was still wanted and for the next two years he worked steadily on a per diem basis. He recalls that, "the company maintained a 'basic crew' and requisitioned per day workers as they were needed. There was lots of favoritism and plenty of discrimination because it was up to the record office to call us or tell us in person whether there was work for the day. Not everyone was lucky."

George recalls that in those early days there was no talk of organizing even though there was lots of grumbling and discontent. "We all knew we were taking a beating on the 6-day, 48-hour week. We all worked overtime, but only the Supervisors' favorites got overtime pay. More often," he says, "we were just given time off. In this way the supervisor got the work out and still balanced the budget."

In 1933 Macy's decided to make him a "Regular Employee," but, George says now, "that was a doubtful advantage, because working for one supervisor who had the power to hire and fire was really hazardous. On a per diem basis we had worked for a different boss almost every day and he didn't get a chance to develop any grudges."

It wasn't until 1936 that the grapevine began carrying reports that there was a movement towards organizing. "With no Wagner Act to protect us," George recalls, "there was very little talk. Many departments, however, were organized and ready and waiting for the day they could come out in the open."

"I was the spokesman for my group because in my job I covered the entire store. That gave me an opportunity to gather more information and to establish more contacts."

Seeming surprised by the memory, George says, "In 1936 I had only heard of Sam Kovenetsky. It wasn't until 1937, when the movement came a bit more into the open that we met. Though our Union was still not a wide open

affair, we finally reached the point where we would meet in the Astor Cafeteria or in a neighboring church. From then on, things really began to move!"

At the first open meeting of his department, held in 1939, George Gurian was elected Shop Steward. While serving in that capacity, he established a system which he says was the forerunner of today's Floor Committee. At that time, he took the responsibility for taking major grievances up with the head of the Receiving Department. An example that came to his mind concerned the company's decision to move the China and Glassware Receiving unit to the warehouse. George says, "I went to the head of the Division and raised the roof. He finally had to come down and convince the men! Well, we no sooner got to the warehouse when we were told that we had to join their Union and that our Macy seniority didn't count for a thing! At that point, an almost unheard of thing happened — we had a stoppage! It lasted for just one day and the company backed down!"

From the time he was elected Steward to this very day, with only a short breather in between, George has held high and responsible Union posts. He was elected Financial Secretary and then Vice President when the only paid officials were the union's business agents. When he wasn't in either of those posts he was serving on the Executive Board. "But," he says, "I really won my spurs during the 1946 strike—the one and only we have had—so far."

To be continued in the next issue

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